# The PULPIT

*A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching*

DECEMBER 1944

Christmas Number


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*Contributed by Readers of* THE PULPIT

### The Conversion of Dr. Raven

Dr. Charles E. Raven, one of the intellectual leaders of England, tells of his early struggles. In school he attended church but aside from a certain emotional thrill he was not deeply touched. His mind was baffled by many questions. Many doubts assailed him. After leaving university, he went to visit a friend of college days who was now a minister at Stoke-on-Trent. For brute ugliness Stoke was worse than anything he had ever seen. He found his friend ill, and the grim tragedy of the place struck him cold with misery. This friend had loved the country and music and all beautiful things; and he was living in this hell! Dr. Raven writes: "I found him, and behold he was not alone. Here, walking with him in the midst of this furnace, was Jesus: and its flames were an aureole. There was joy and quiet confidence in his face, purpose in his life, sympathy and strength in all his actions. Jesus was alive and present to my friend as he had been to the eleven in the upper room." From this experience the youthful Raven passed from the hesitation that comes from intellectual doubts into the clearness of a cause to which he could be wholly committed.—*R. Dale LeCount, Sixth Ave., Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Ala.*

### A Soldier Finds God

Chaplain Eben. Cobb Brink tells of standing beside a soldier at the rail of an army transport in mid-Atlantic. After a little, the soldier spoke: "You know, Chaplain, I never saw the ocean before. It makes you think, doesn't it?" After a while the soldier continued: "Out on the plains where I come from—you know I used to raise wheat—I never thought much about God. The church was a long way from us, and we didn't have a chance to go very often. I guess I never had religion. I used to say my prayers as a kid, but that's a long ways off now. . . . You know, the first night out I had a feeling I ought to say my prayers. It was funny, but the only prayer I could think of saying was the one I learned as a kid, 'Now I lay me down to sleep.' It didn't seem to help much. So I tried the Lord's Prayer—it didn't work. I guess I finally fell asleep. It's funny, I kept thinking about it. That's when you came by and gave us those Testaments. I marked the first verse I read in it—just where it opened itself as I started to look through it." He turned his back to the wind as he took the Testament out of his pocket to read the passage: "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." With a sparkle in his eye he faced the chaplain. "Chaplain—that was me! I had never said thank you to God for anything. Last night I was still thinking about it when I got in the bunk. I didn't know how to tell God, but I felt I wanted to tell him something. And as I was trying to tell him, I sort of felt he was right there near me. I knew he was there."—*From 'And God Was There.' Reported by W. Theodore Allison, Ontario, Calif.*

### 'A Date With the Gulf Stream'

A few years ago a little ship put out from a port on the Gulf of Mexico, headed for a port on the northeastern coast of the United States. The ship was not only small and much the worse for wear; it looked like something left over from Admiral Farragut's attack on New Orleans in the Civil War. Quite a crowd of friends of the skipper, and a chorus who came to jeer, gathered for the embarkation. They had a lot of sport.

"You won't get anywhere in that tub," was the cheering send-off.

"Oh, yes, I will," confidently replied the skipper.

"What makes you think so?" he was asked by many of the bystanders.

"I've got a date," he replied. "I've got a date with the Gulf Stream." And he had!

The skipper was a mariner, first class. He knew his winds and water. He had a definite date with a power greater than himself or his little craft. He was not sailing only under his own wit or the momentum of his engines. He had a date with a power not of himself which made for marine "righteousness."—*Halford E. Luccock in 'The Chaplain.'*

### Invincibility of Truth

When Dr. E. O. Lawrence began operating his atom-smashing machine at the University of California, the product liberated in largest volume was neutrons—ten billion of them per second. Though lacking an electric charge of their own, they could travel at the speed of light and had immense penetrating power. The neutrons sped through the big machine, through the heavy lead tanks of water, and through the massive concrete walls of the Radiation Laboratory, to points a hundred yards beyond. If their speed and penetrating power were reduced by barriers of paraffin, they only gained in their ability to smash anything in their path. They are counted upon ultimately to release the fantastic power locked in the atomic nucleus.

So is it with a truth whose time has come. One may confine it, silence it, isolate it, erect thick walls about it, but it will penetrate them all with the speed of light. If one determines further to retard its influence, he will but multiply its power to destroy every opposing force in its path. In God's universe the truth is bound to win; one cannot hinder it with impunity. Our task is to release it effectively, and undreamed cosmic powers will accelerate its progress.—*L. Earl Jackson, Winter Hill Baptist Church, Somerville, Mass.*

### All Are Interdependent

Susan Glaspell wrote a story called "Pollen." Ira the farmer concentrates on his own farm, without any consideration of the farms of his neighbors, the Dietzes and Balches, who often tried to be friendly with him but to no avail. Ira specialized on corn, developed a new species which won prizes at the state fair. When anyone asked for seed of this prize corn, Ira said, "Guess it's all spoke for this year." But corn has a peculiar way—it must associate with other corn. For two years now Ira had been forced to admit that his corn which grew next to the Balches' was inferior. One summer afternoon he found that the trade wind was blowing pollen from the Balches' field to his. Winds blew across boundary lines, carrying the life that changed other life. It was a maddening fact to one who wanted to be self-sufficient. After further deliberation he put some seed corn in a sack and picked up his hat. "Where are you going?" asked his mother. "To the Balches." "Why?" she asked. "To take them some seed and tell them all I know about raising corn." "What are you going to do that for?" queried his mother. *"Because I can't have good corn while their corn's poor."*—*Fred E. Luchs, Community Presbyterian Church, Athens, Ohio, quoting from Hugh S. Tigner.*

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# The Pulpit

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

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## The Christmas Gifts

BY ORMAL LEROY MILLER

THE giving of gifts is one of the beautiful customs of Christmas. In the name of the One whose birthday we celebrate, we remember our loved ones with some token of affection, suggestive of the words of the Master: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Thus in symbol we continue the practice that marked the events of the first Christmas; the spirit of good will is expressed tangibly in the gifts which we give.

The story of the birth of Jesus as told by Matthew includes the account of the coming of the magi and the expression of their homage in the giving of gifts: "They fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." One of the familiar carols which we sing describes the journey of these wise men, and suggests a symbolism contained in their gifts.

We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I;
Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising all men raising,
Worship Him, God on high.

Myrrh is mine: its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom:
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

The dramatic events that characterized the nativity of Jesus have been repeated in song and story, so that they live in our memory. We are told that after listening to the amazing story of the shepherds, telling of angel songs on the Bethlehem hillsides, "Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart." It is safe to assume that she probably also carefully treasured the gifts which had been laid at the feet of her Child by the visiting magi. They were treasures that had been offered to a poor child, born amid humble surroundings, and certainly there was no post-Christmas rush to exchange them! There is no written record of the subsequent history of these gifts, but in imagination we can reconstruct a possible use to which they might have been put.

I

The visit of the three wise men was as brief as it was spectacular. Following their act of adoration, they departed into their own country. The excitement caused by their visit did not immediately die down, but Bethlehem was filled with speculation as to the significance of this sensational occurrence.

Sleep did not come quickly to Joseph that night. Responsibility for a helpless child is always a cause for concern, and in this instance there was an intensified problem growing out of the dramatic appearance of the shepherds and wise men. Obviously this was no ordinary child, and his safety became a matter of especial importance. Added to the physical frailty which marks every infant life, there was the external threat of a hostile society. The magi had reported the deep interest which Herod took in their mission, and his request for detailed information as to the whereabouts of the child whom they sought. They themselves were so distrustful of this wily Oriental despot that they decided to follow another route on their return journey, so that it would not be necessary for them to pass through Jerusalem.

Troubled by these disturbing thoughts, the fitful sleep of Joseph was interrupted by the appearance of an angel messenger, bringing a warning that he should flee with Mary and the child into Egypt to escape the cruelty of Herod. Quickly he took steps to obey this warning, and that same night he gathered his meager belongings and set forth on the long and difficult journey to the land of the Pharaohs.

The events of the succeeding days demonstrated that this was no idle panic, but the soldiers of Herod shortly appeared in the streets of Bethlehem, seeking out all the young children and putting them to the sword. If physical force could meet the threat to his throne, the Judean king certainly proposed to take all possible steps to eliminate any rival to his power!

Joseph's problem was by no means simplified by flight. He might gain a measure of safety from persecution in a foreign land, but to achieve this he was obliged to undertake a long journey and subsequently maintain his family among strangers. Not being a wealthy man, it is very probable that his slender resources had already been strained by the enforced journey to Bethlehem to comply with the census edict. Now they had become refugees, faced with the appalling problems of support and rehabilitation which have haunted those who in every generation have been forced

to flee from the cruelty of their fellows. There was always the possibility that a skilled carpenter could find remunerative work in any community, provided bars of discrimination did not set him apart as an unwanted foreigner. At best, life was bound to be difficult for a time, and called for careful planning.

In such a precarious predicament the gold of the magi became in reality a God-sent gift. As they hurried along the caravan trail that led south along the shore of the blue Mediterranean, Joseph and Mary resolved that this gift, which had come so miraculously from the hand of the Eastern monarch, should now be transformed into food and clothing and shelter to provide for the needs of their infant son. The treasure laid before him as a symbol of loving devotion should be used to insure a safe start in life to this One who was destined in the coming years to transform the life of mankind.

In later years Jesus became very severely critical of wealth. There are those who have interpreted his action as calling for a repudiation of all material possessions by those who would be his followers. Many have assumed in his name a rule of absolute poverty, declaring that the Master has demanded of them this denial of physical resources. It seems a bit improbable, however, that the One whose life had been enriched by the gift of a rich ruler, whose safety had been secured through the fortunate possession of resources given by a man of wealth, should in his later teachings have swept aside all property as evil. No, the fault did not lie with wealth, but with its abuse! It was the miserly spirit caused by selfish greed for money, the injustice that so often characterized the conduct of those who possessed economic power over their fellows, the supremacy of material over human and spiritual values, which called forth the denunciation of Jesus. He taught men to place first things first, and warned them that the love of money was a terrible root of trouble, warping the judgment of many and transforming potential blessings into demoralizing evil. "Seek *first* the kingdom of God, the growth of a mature spirit," said he, confident that the one who had solved his spiritual problems could then safely administer the physical resources that might have been entrusted to him.

The gift of the ancient wise man suggests an attitude of faithful stewardship which has repeatedly resulted in the dedication of material possessions to the creative tasks of the world. Good work must be underwritten by financial support, and money can prove a blessing to the world as well as a curse. Many a promising life has been stunted by poverty, and denied opportunities for expansion by the limitations imposed by financial stringency. Young and unpopular causes that carry a great promise for the future have needed the practical support of a wise man and his gift of gold. Today we dedicate our resources to the tasks of war; tomorrow the establishment of peace will call for sacrifice of material wealth in the interest of spiritual advance. The spirit of devotion that called forth the commendation of Jesus upon the widow's mite must also have brought joy to his heart when it was found in the action of a man of wealth who out of his abundance gave sacrificially for God's purposes.

## II

The years sped past. With the help of the golden treasure, the little family lived quietly in Egypt, until one day a traveler brought news of the death of the tyrant, Herod. The changed conditions now made it safe to return to Nazareth, and it was not long until Joseph was again working in the familiar carpenter shop, and life had been reorganized according to its former patterns.

The dreams and the promises of that night in Bethlehem were not forgotten, and under the careful guidance of Mary and Joseph the boy Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, gaining favor with his companions and his God. We need only to look at the grown man to see reflected the home training of these youthful years. The boy who experienced a father's love in his own daily life found it very natural to describe the love of God in similar terms.

> Brave Mary, fluent-minded, set him free.
> But Joseph to the little Jesus gave
> The vision of a father strong to save.
> From earthly fatherhood to heavenly
> Was but a step for Jesus. Trustfully
> He tells a father's care—'The very hairs
> Upon your head are numbered.' Thus he dares—
> A son of man—the Son of God to be.
>
> No later word of Joseph do we hear.
> Perhaps he died—his spirit, yet more near
> To Jesus, merged in God's great Fatherhood—
> The rock on which his later sons have stood.
> For that a man named Joseph loved his son
> We pray Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.
>
> *(Mrs. Arthur C. McGiffert)*

Youth gave way to the responsibilities of adulthood, and Jesus took his place at the work bench to support his widowed mother and the younger children in the household. Then one day excitement gripped the family, for Jesus was to appear as the leader of the weekly service in the synagogue.

For several weeks he had been away from Nazareth, having gone to visit his cousin, John, who was creating a sensation as a prophetic preacher in the wild setting of the Jordan valley. Word had come back to Mary that her son had received the rite of baptism under strange circumstances that had impressed the witnesses with a sense of God's nearness. Jesus, instead of going back to his accustomed affairs, had then retired to the solitude of the wild hill country for a period of quiet meditation. Coming back to Galilee he had created a sensation by launching forth as a preacher. The authority of his words and the power of his deeds brought him swift fame that found its way to his old associates in Nazareth.

It was little wonder that the news of his homecoming, with the announcement that he would speak in his own place of worship, was the occasion for great interest. The pride of his loved ones in the achievement of the eldest son in the family brought excited anticipation of this noteworthy day. They gladly assumed

their share in this event by making careful preparation at the synagogue, taking care that all was clean and in order for the hour of worship and instruction. Planning devotedly for each detail that might bring beauty and helpfulness to this service, Mary went to the chest where the family's choicest treasures were kept, and from its place she took the precious box of frankincense which had been given to her son at the time of his birth.

Once before she had taken a bit of this fragrant incense to be used in the great Temple in Jerusalem when Jesus had made his first youthful pilgrimage to the Holy City. Now she used it lavishly to prepare the home synagogue for worship, making it fragrant with the choice odors of Oriental spice.

The hour of worship arrived, and the attendant handed the sacred roll containing the words of the prophet Isaiah to Jesus. From old familiarity with the ancient document he turned to the passage which expressed his message, reading to the congregation: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Handing the manuscript back, he began in simple language to point out the meaning of the words he had read, and to declare their contemporary fulfillment. The assembled crowd was impressed by the graciousness of his words, but the narrowness of their minds made them unwilling to accept the implications of his message. After all, this was the young carpenter who had grown up in their midst, and it was unthinkable that he should set himself up as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Truth that was pleasantly intangible when viewed from a distance now roused their passions when brought close home, and a tumult broke forth in the synagogue, bringing to an end the period of devotion.

There was no beauty in the worship of that Sabbath day in Nazareth, but the fragrance of the frankincense that was associated with his appearance went forth from that place to permeate the whole world. His neighbors repudiated him, but multitudes without number have proclaimed him Lord. His teachings have become the growing conscience of mankind; his spirit has characterized the lives of the loveliest personalities of the ages. The poor have found new opportunities opened to them in the democratic atmosphere that has been created wherever the fragrance of his spirit has found its way. The fetters of tradition, and injustice, and selfishness have been struck off. Wherever men have opened their minds and hearts to his message, the way has been opened to transforming fellowship with God, and to the discovery of his will.

Another of the gifts of the magi had been used, but the rich odors of the frankincense were wafted far beyond the limits of that little synagogue to purify and beautify the atmosphere of God's world.

## III

There was but one of the gifts of the magi left for Mary to cherish. The urn of myrrh, with its pungent bitterness, still stood among her treasured keepsakes to remind her of the three strange visitors who had come to see her newborn son in distant Bethlehem.

Jesus had left Nazareth following the disappointing appearance in his home synagogue, resuming the life of an itinerant preacher and teacher. The news of his activities caused Mary many troubled thoughts that alternated between thrilling pride in his success and anxious fear for his future. Visitors from the cities bordering the Sea of Galilee told of the miraculous cures that he had performed; they described the small band of devoted disciples that he had organized, and the great crowds that flocked to hear him. They told also of the growing opposition of the ruling classes—the priestly group that disliked a new and upsetting message; the civil authorities that were always suspicious of anyone who gave evidence of achieving a significant following among the masses of the people. As some of these disturbing reports reached her, she was moved to remonstrate with him, sending an appeal that he return home for a time of rest and retirement. Surely the enmity of influential persons would ultimately cause trouble, and common sense seemed to prompt a bit of caution. Her warnings went unheeded, however, and with each passing day his fame became greater, his leadership more conspicuous—and the opposition became more bitter.

The Passover season was approaching, and the annual pilgrimage of the faithful to Jerusalem began. It had been several years since Mary had attended the great feast in the Holy City, as the long journey and the crowded city made it an exhausting experience. Now there came an invitation from a loved friend in the capital city urging her to join the Nazareth pilgrims, and to accept the hospitality of her home during the period of her stay in Jerusalem. The invitation was prompted by a message which had come from Jesus, stating that he and his band of disciples were to be present for the Passover, and asking for the use of a room in her home where they might share in the ceremonial supper.

Mary's growing anxiety for the welfare of her son prompted her to accept the invitation. There followed a few days of busy preparation, as the affairs of the home were organized for the time during which she would be absent, and as supplies were assembled to care for her needs on the journey. As she packed her meager baggage, she included a few of her choice treasures, and acting on an impulse, placed the urn of myrrh in a corner of her bundle.

It was a strenuous week, with visits to the Temple and to the crowded bazaars. There was a holiday spirit in the city as the throngs poured in from distant places, with their varying garb and dialect. The presence of the famous Galilean teacher caused widespread interest which was heightened when on his first visit to the Temple area he had indignantly repudiated the commercialization of the sacred precincts. His righteous denunciation of the authorities on that occasion and his repeated derision of the smug Pharisees added greatly to his popularity with the people, but at the same time intensified the antagonism of those who had been rebuked in his fearless preaching.

The night of the Passover feast arrived, and as Mary sat with her friend in the quiet home they discussed the events of the week, with the growing tension that had developed between Jesus and the authorities. The disciples had arrived with their leader to observe the ceremonial supper in the upper room of the house, and there had been an air of anxiety evident in their behavior as they soberly went about their preparations for the supper. The murmur of their voices could be heard, with the quiet tones of Jesus' words dominating most of the conversation. Ultimately the two women heard them leave, descending the outer stairway and vanishing in the night.

Suddenly there came down the street the sound of marching men, and there was a clamor at the door. It was a group of the Temple guards, and their leader demanded Jesus, who was reported to have been eating the Passover at this place. Discovering that he had left, there was a brief consultation and the command was given to march on. In an agony of apprehension, the two women hurriedly roused young John Mark, who had been asleep for some time, and charged him to carry a warning to Jesus in his customary retreat on the Mount of Olives. Then followed a sleepless night, as they anxiously awaited word of what had transpired. The first news came from the returning boy, who reported that he had arrived just after the soldiers had discovered the band. Creeping close in the darkness he had watched the tragic scene in the flickering circle of the flaring torches, as Judas had stepped from the midst of the soldiers to identify Jesus with a kiss of betrayal, followed by a brief but futile moment of opposition on the part of Peter, the scattering of the terrified disciples, and the return of Jesus as a prisoner of the Temple guard.

Events moved very swiftly in the next few hours, with a relentless savagery that found its tragic climax on a windswept hill outside the city, where in the early afternoon Jesus was nailed to a cross. Her mind refusing to grasp the full significance of the terrible events that had so suddenly brought calamity to her eldest son, Mary, surrounded by a circle of sympathetic friends, watched and waited beside the cross. Then followed a seemingly endless Sabbath day, when there was nothing that could be done but sit and think, dazedly reviewing again and again the horror of those recent hours.

The Sabbath day, with its rigid restrictions, ultimately passed and the dawn of the first day of the week found the sleepless women ready to render a last loving service to the one whom they had seen hastily placed in Joseph's tomb.

After about thirty years, there was now a use for the last of the gifts of the magi, and taking the urn of myrrh to be used as a burial ointment Mary hurried with her friends through the early dawn to the rock-hewn sepulcher on the hillside. There they were met with an unbelievable announcement: "He is not here, but is risen!" The empty tomb substantiated the thrilling words, but the full realization of what had transpired did not immediately become apparent. Then the words which he had uttered returned to their memory: "He that loseth his life shall find it."

They remembered his confident assurance that a life which is built around spiritual qualities is deathless and immortal; that God, who is the ultimate Power in the universe, has a greater destiny for his children than that which is marked by their limited physical existence. "In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you." Brute force had had its day, but death had been swallowed up in victory—the sheer spiritual power of this life was invincible: it was immortal!

Returning to Nazareth, Mary carefully returned the gift of myrrh to its niche. As she placed it there, she saw again in memory those strange magi who had come to Bethlehem with their story of a long journey under the guidance of a star. She recalled the joy and the sadness that had been mingled in the trail of the three gifts which had been offered so graciously on that occasion. She thought of the anxiety of the Egyptian exile which had been softened by the gold of the Eastern monarch. Again she lived through the heartbreak of that service in the Nazareth synagogue—the disappointment that had been in large measure offset by the growing allegiance of multitudes to her son, the spreading spirit of hope and love that radiated from his ministry. Very vividly she thought of how the tragedy of Calvary had been transformed into a radiant triumph.

* * *

The gold which sustained life; the frankincense which permeated the world with a glorious new faith; the myrrh which proclaimed a deathless life for the children of God: surely these were fitting gifts from kings to the King of Life!

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THE inescapable conclusion of all that this global war is saying to us is that we must begin now to prepare for an extraordinary missionary offensive. Otherwise, we are in danger of being enveloped by the inevitable reaction which always follows any long and costly war. Either the church must surrender to apathy and self-satisfaction or we must inaugurate a bold offensive. There is before us this very hour as bracing and emancipating a challenge as was ever offered to Christians in any century.

BISHOP A. J. MOORE.

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OUR witness to a lost world is not the making of a creed but the keeping of a covenant.

G. GORDON BROWNVILLE.

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GOD created this a moral world in which disregard of truth, justice, the needs and the well-being of others, and the placing of material values ahead of spiritual values, is bound to bring disaster.

FRANCIS B. SAYRE.

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I SEE on all sides a hunger for affirmations, for a world without confusion, waste or groping, a world that is full of order and purpose, and for ourselves, in America, a chance to build it.

VAN WYCK BROOKS.

# So God Imparts

By Howard J. Conn

TO THE unimaginative person Christmas night is like any other, but to one who loves the Christ Child Christmas is a night of nights. When we come to the Christmas season with loving hearts we discover that God imparts anew the blessings of his love.

In 1865, a young American clergyman, then only thirty years of age but destined to become one of our best-loved preachers, was given a year's leave of absence by his Philadelphia parish that he might travel abroad. In December of that year Phillips Brooks reached Palestine where he visited the scenes of the Bible stories. On Christmas Eve he and a few friends rode from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. As they passed through the fields they found shepherds still keeping watch over their flocks. It was a calm, clear night, like that of the first Christmas. Bethlehem was dark and quiet as it nestled among the Judean hills.

Three years later Phillips Brooks wrote a hymn-poem for the children of his Sunday school in which he tells of his feeling as he spent Christmas Eve in the fields about that ancient village.

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.

Yet for all the stillness which made the scene look like many others, the little town of Bethlehem was for Phillips Brooks aglow with a heavenly light. It was not necessary that a miracle of nature occur to impress him. The miracle had happened within him, and he brought to that scene the sincere devotion of a heart that long had loved the Lord Jesus Christ. So Phillips Brooks could tell his children:

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

### THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

To the careless and indifferent, sleep has no dreams and silent stars have no message. But while others sleep, the eyes of love can see the dark streets of Bethlehem shining with an everlasting light. In a manger in that obscure village was born a child who was to bring hope to the discouraged, healing to the sick, courage to the faint. The hopes and fears of all the years were met in those quiet streets of Bethlehem, for the child born there that night brought the assurance that God yet cares for earth and comes in lowly form to enter into the lives of men.

For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.

It is always this way—that God gives his gifts where we least expect them, that he comes not where we blow the trumpets in expectation, but where we wait silently for his will to unfold in us. Surely this is the great mystery and the great beauty of Christmas—a mystery and a beauty unforgettably expressed by these words of Phillips Brooks which we love to sing:

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him,
Still the dear Christ enters in.

It was so on that first Christmas night, and it is still true in our generation, that God's gifts cannot be wrested from him by force, but they are given silently and quietly when we attune our souls to him.

### MILITARY FORCE AN INCIDENT

On Christmas Eve two thousand years ago there was a great display of political force. The habits of men were wrenched about by the decree of the emperor that every man should return to his native village so that a census might be taken. Men and women moved under that political force: that is why Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem rather than in Nazareth. There was action, there was motion; but God's gifts were not imparted through that political force.

On that first Christmas Eve there was a display of military force. The Roman legions were keeping law and order, protecting the travelers from robbers, enabling the tax-gatherers to get all they could. But God's gift to the world did not come through the Roman legions but through him who was born that night as the Prince of Peace.

And there was a display of entertainment and of gaiety. The inns were crowded with travelers visiting, laughing and celebrating. This decree of Caesar's really gave the people a Roman holiday. But God's gift was not imparted through the gaiety of the banquets and the dance. In the stillness of the midnight hour, when the revelers had worn themselves out, God's gift was given in the hush of a humble manger.

Today the world still has its political force, its military force, its gay entertainment. But the message of Christmas is something other than these.

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.

### WAITING IN QUIETNESS

The great need today is for the meditative heart, for the mind that can commune in quietness with the Heavenly Father. We live in a world of sin, and our

sinfulness is increased by our constant striving and lust for the things we do not possess—for recognition, for popularity, for health, for wealth, for success, for glamor, for excitement. Every person must of course learn a certain degree of self-reliance, but most of those who strive so hard only burn themselves out and increase the sinfulness of the world. The goal is not reached that way. The blessings of heaven and the fulness of the abundant life are not won by us in our prideful striving. They are God-given. They are God-given—not to the proud and self-confident, but to those humble souls who wait in quietness and confidence on the Lord.

It is easy to be scornful of the religious spirit. We do not hear any angels singing in the twentieth century. We do not see any heavenly light shining on our path. We have never answered the doorbell to find Christ standing on the threshold. Why waste precious time thinking about religion? Phillips Brooks has stated the simple answer:

No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him,
Still the dear Christ enters in.

God lives. God acts. God cares. Every day God imparts to some human hearts the blessings of his heaven. Yet always, how silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!

### 'ROOM FOR THE CHRIST CHILD'

The church invites you once again to become a Christmas pilgrim in whose heart there are long avenues of silence and broad vistas of quietness. Only under those conditions will there be room for the Christ Child to enter in.

Phillips Brooks looked upon the dark and sleepy village of Bethlehem, and saw it as anyone with him would have seen it—with mortal human eyes. But because Phillips Brooks had worshiped the Christ in his heart he also saw the little town of Bethlehem shining in the everlasting light of God's abiding love. For him the star was bright. For him the angels sang. For him the wise men journeyed. So may the miracle of Christmas happen for each one of us, if we too have learned how silently but how wondrously God imparts the blessings of his heaven.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emanuel.

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PRAYER is not a substitute for work; it is a desperate effort to work further and to be efficient beyond the range of one's powers. It is not the lazy who are most inclined to prayer; those pray most who care most, and who, having worked hard, find it intolerable to be defeated. GEORGE SANTAYANA.

# Hoping Against Hope

BY ILION T. JONES

*Who in hope believed against hope. Romans 4:18.*

PERHAPS few of us realize that we are using a biblical expression when we say we are "hoping against hope." Paul used it of Abraham who persistently held to his hopes for the fulfilment of the promises in spite of the fact that at times he all but lost faith. James Moffatt has caught the real meaning of the expression by translating it, "Abraham when hope was gone hoped on in faith." Hoping when hope is gone! That is what Christians have always had to do throughout their long history. Read the New Testament, as well as the records of the church through the post-biblical times, and you will find that to be true. And that is what we will have to do—hope against hope—at Christmas time this year—in this dark world of war and desolation and fear and woe.

I

The Christian hope has had its ups and downs through the centuries. It would seem that if the gospel is really true it should have become the universal faith of mankind long ago. There was high expectancy over the coming of Jesus. Utopia, in the form held by the prophets and pictured by the sages, was momentarily expected. It was believed that Jesus would inaugurate the new order at once and that the whole world would be transformed into the Kingdom of God. And then the Divine One through whom God was supposed to usher in the new day was completely crushed by the forces of evil. He died an ignominious death on the cross. It is impossible for us to realize what Christ's death did to the people who were expecting him at any moment to manifest his supernatural power to set up the Kingdom of God. It was, at least momentarily, the literal end of their hopes. "We had hoped it would be he who would deliver Israel," the disciples said to him on the way to Emmaus. My, how they *had* hoped this! And that hope was now lying in ruins.

But their despondency and despair were of short duration. Before they had time to recover from the first shock of his death, news spread that he was alive. As Peter later said, this resurrection "begat us again into a living hope." That was indeed a fact, an astounding fact, one of the miracles of history. Their dead hopes were actually brought back to life by the resurrection of Jesus. All their dreams revived again and in an enlarged form. Christianity became a flaming movement to capture the world for their Lord. Both Paul and John began to conceive of Christ in cosmic terms. They said he was the key to the significance of God's whole creative purpose on the earth.

"In him all things hold together. . ." "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God." That word "now" became an electrical word with them. It was used scores of times. "Now" something grand had come to its climax.

Then began a long series of disillusionments and frustrations that have continued to our own day. At first rapid progress was made. Then came persecutions which all but threatened the end of the movement. In those persecutions many followers of Christ, deciding he could not be the Messiah, else his movement would not be so easily conquered by the forces of evil, gave up their hopes entirely. At intervals since Christianity has had eras of rapid progress when it looked as if it would really become the universal faith. But always something happened internally or externally to dash those hopes to the earth. The results, at least on the surface, have been discouraging since it has now been nearly twenty centuries since Christ was born.

If we were so disposed we could draw a rather gloomy picture of the present outlook for our Christianity. In Palestine and much of the world bordering on the eastern and southeastern coastlines of the Mediterranean—the very section of the earth where Christianity was born and had its initial successes—Mohammedanism has almost completely superseded Christianity. In many countries hitherto regarded as Christian there have been violent anti-Christian revolutions. In Germany, where Protestantism became an organized movement, paganism has been revived on a larger scale. On many mission fields Christianity is making little headway. There are still whole areas of the world where people do not worship the Christian God. At no time has the Christian church, even in those lands we customarily call Christian, been able to produce enough Christian sentiment to right great social wrongs or to have sufficient influence to create a Christian social order. At present Christianity is undergoing one of its severest tests. It is fighting for its very existence.

Why, then, don't we quit? If we have not done the job of making the world Christian in the last two thousand years, what right have we to believe it can be done in another two thousand years? Why not admit we are engaged in a hopeless task, that the thing never can be done and that it will do no good to keep on trying to do it?

## II

There are some very valid and compelling reasons why Christians do not give up, why they keep "hoping against hope." One reason is that the human race cannot live without hope. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." It does indeed! Nothing is so fatal to human life as the loss of hope. No form of human despair is worse than hopelessness. Hope is "an anchor both sure and steadfast to the soul." It is one of man's greatest boons, one of his most pointed stimuli to a satisfying existence. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three"—the three most important of all motivations in the heart and mind of man. Human living at its best involves

> Effort and expectation and desire,
> And something evermore about to be.

Always looking for something better, something about to be that is better than what has been and what is—that is food for the spirit without which man's soul starves to death.

> Like the Phoenix from its ashes
> Beaten man can always rise;
> Nor the rock nor nine-thonged lashes
> Nor evenomed hate nor lies
> Can defeat the patient spirit
> Bravely gazing toward the skies.

Furthermore, the human race cannot live without the *Christian* hope. "We must needs love the highest when we see it." Having once seen the light that shone in Christ man can no longer be content to live in the darkness. Many decades ago Thomas Carlyle said: "For the days that are passing by, even fools are arrested to ask the meaning of them. Few generations of men have seen more impressive days, days of ceaseless calamity, dislocation, disruption, confusion worse confounded. If they were not always days of ceaseless hope, then indeed they are days of utter despair. *But it is no small hope* that will suffice." Ah! That's just it: Christianity is no small hope. It is a hope that goes to the core of man's significance, to the very meaning of the universe, to the heart of God—as, indeed, Paul and John and the other early Christians saw so clearly. Christianity *has* to be true. If this is to be a sane world, a world where intelligence and reason and common sense and moral judgment and spiritual values reign; if it is to be a decent, human world, worthy of the spirit of God and of man, then the Christian gospel must be the goal toward which we work. The alternatives to our Christian hope are intolerable to the human mind. Paul said, "We are saved in hope." (cf. Romans 8:24) That hope does save us from utter despair, utter frustration. It is a political, economic, social and moral imperative.

The bald fact is, therefore, that we keep our Christmas hope because we have to. As Bob Cratchett was determined to keep his Christmas good cheer to the last, so every human being has to determine to keep to the last his hopes of a cleaner, more humane, more just, more gentle, more Christlike world. That is why our Christmas celebrations have always gripped the heart and held it like a vise. Having once seen the significance of Christ we insist that his gospel must not fail, must not perish from the earth. Lincoln once said, "We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth." Our Christian ideals are certainly the earth's last, best hope. If they are lost, man is lost.

In one of his syndicated articles Walter Lippmann says that the strength of our American cause comes from sources "far older and deeper than the French Revolution or the commercialist imperialism of the nineteenth century. . . . We are bearers, often unworthy, yet the bearers of the great central and uni-

versal tradition of civilized life which originated in the basin of the Mediterranean sea. . . . We do not proclaim a new ideology invented twenty years ago in the back alley of an Italian city, or in a beer hall in Munich, but the common human tradition by which in the end all civilized men—be they rich or poor, great or small—judge and expect themselves to be judged." And simply because we did not invent this tradition, Mr. Lippmann says, the whole world is still excited about it, even when we "blunder, or boast of it, or brandish it, and are unworthy of it." If there is to be any rationality to man's life on this planet the Christian hope must be realized.

III

How can we keep our hope a living thing? Basically it is a question of faith. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And, as Paul says, "Hope that is seen is not hope." We hope for things in which we believe although they are yet in the distant future. Our Christmas hope is founded, not in mere airy dreams, not in wishful thinking, but in faith in God, faith in the kind of universe in which we live, in the values we believe God himself is backing up and working for. That faith and that alone keeps us going. Tennyson has some lines in which he pictures a person down upon the slopes of the hill crying out to the summit, "Is there any hope?"

> To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
> But in a tongue no man could understand;
> And in the glimmering limit far withdrawn
> God made himself an awful rose of dawn.

We believe in the dawn because we believe God is back of it. We believe in the star of Bethlehem for the same reason. It is men whose faith in God is firm and unshakable who will keep the Christian hope living. In dark and dismal days men become frightened because they lack any sustaining and positive conviction of God's awful presence in his world. And frightened people are a danger to themselves and to others in a crisis. By the same tokens, the people to be relied upon in times of crisis are those who have within a sustaining faith: they shall bring that steadying influence, that courage and persistence which bring our hope one step nearer realization.

Our human drama looks so hopeless at times—"the regret, the struggle, and the falling, the days desolate and the useless years"—but it isn't hopeless and it isn't useless. "No labor is vain in the Lord," if we only have faith to believe it. No energy is wasted, no suffering is in vain, no defeat is final, to those who have faith. Men of faith not only wait for the dawn but hasten its coming.

> Ye that have faith to look with fearless eyes
> Beyond the tragedy of a world at strife,
> And know that out of death and night shall rise
> The dawn of ampler life:
> Rejoice, whatever anguish rend the heart,
> That God has given you the priceless dower
> To live in these great times and have your part
> In Freedom's crowning hour;
> That ye might tell your sons who see the light
> High in the heavens—their heritage to take—
> "I saw the power of darkness take their flight;
> I saw the morning break."

It is also a question of patience. And patience is part of hope. "If we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Patience is simply long-range faith and the planning that goes with it. It is a realization that progress is slow, contentment with piecemeal progress, and willingness to keep on at the job when there seems to be no progress at all. Browning once said, "The only certitude is the certitude of the awful patience of God." "A thousand years is as a day and a day as a thousand years" with God. He is independent of time. We become Godlike when we rise above slavery to time and think of our ideals in terms of centuries instead of years.

Channing Pollock says he was once chatting with Nicholas Murray Butler about his play, "The Enemy," which deals with the problem of war. All his adult life Mr. Butler has been an ardent worker for international peace. In the course of the conversation Mr. Pollock said something about "stopping the next war." Whereupon Mr. Butler leaned back in his chair, and, smiling faintly, said, "You can't stop the next war." Mr. Pollock asked, "Then what are we struggling for?" To which Mr. Butler answered: "To prevent the war a hundred years from now . . . a hundred years or five hundred. And it isn't a moment too soon to begin." The ability to participate in the slow, painful climb of the race from millennium to millennium without losing heart—that is sharing the awful patience of God.

Halford E. Luccock tells about a denominational home for old people deciding to broaden its field to include several churches, and of searching around for a more inclusive name. After much discussion they chose the name, "Home for Worn-out Christians." Worn-out Christians? That is a misnomer. At least the faith of Christians never wears out.

> Not for us are content, and quiet, and peace of mind,
> For we go seeking a city that we shall never find.
> Only the road, and the dawn, the sun and the wind and the rain,
> And the watch fire under the stars, and sleep, and the road again.
> We travel the dusty road, till the light of the day is dim
> And the sunset shows us spires away on the world's rim.

Yes, when one day is done and the sun has set we know another day is already on its way, another dawn, and still other dawns innumerable, and with each dawn the going on and on to the city whose spires we see only by faith, until the great day of God's triumph comes.

It is also a question of experience. Perhaps that is why we have faith in it: we know in our hearts that it is true and lovely beyond all worth. Once we love we know love is eternal. Once we are free men we know all men must be free. Once we feel within ourselves what Paul felt, the life with Christ, the life hid with Christ in God, we know we have something of eternal worth and we cannot rest until all men

also feel that worth. Robert Louis Stevenson, making a list of his sufferings and sadness and sorrow, said: "I still hope; I still believe; I still see the good in the inch and cling to it." Having experienced one inch of goodness he is compelled to believe in its intrinsic worth for all men. Upon another occasion he wrote:

To go on forever and fail and go on again,
And be mauled to the earth, and arise,
And content for the shade of a word, and a thing not seen with the eyes,
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night,
That somehow the right is the right,
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough. . .

There it is again: "half of a broken hope for a pillow at night": broken—only half of it left—but it is the pillow on which he rests his weary faith—his faith that things must come out right. Ah! We have felt the worth of our Christian ideals all too seldom, all too fitfully. But at Christmas time it sweeps over our souls with a compulsion that cannot be denied. And we dare not give it up. It is our way out and up. It is the hope of redemption for this disillusioned and weary old world.

This Christian hope is not a passive thing. It is active. It is creative. We hope and then we go to work to make the hope a reality. We hope

Till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

May that hope come afresh into our hearts this Christmastide, we pray, O God!

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We live amid one of the greatest crises of human history. Not only war, famine, pestilence and revolution, but a legion of other calamities are rampant over the whole world. Mental, moral, esthetic and social anarchy reign supreme. Millions of human beings are killed annually. Many other millions are turned into the maimed victims and derelicts of humanity. Mankind has become the distorted image of its noble self. The crisis is omnipresent and involves almost the whole of culture from top to bottom. . . .

Without the Kingdom of God we are doomed to a weary and torturing pilgrimage from calamity to calamity, from crisis to crisis, with only brief moments of transitory improvement for regaining our breath. In that case the way out will always be the "way of death," ordeal and destruction. Then the presence of calamities in human history becomes inevitable and above all *meaningful*. For they become a part of Theodicy, the only educative instrument that by pitiless ordeal can restore the demoralized human animal and remind him of his divine mission on this planet.

Piritkim Sorokin.
in *The Crisis of Our Age*

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People are no longer asking, "How shall we pay for the war?" Instead, they are beginning to say, "If we can finance the war in this way, why can't we apply similar methods on a similar scale to realizing social and cultural aims in peace?" Julian Huxley.

# The Lost Word of Jesus

By Thoburn T. Brumbaugh

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. John 12:32.*

I WONDER how many millions of people throughout the earth have drawn spiritual and moral sustenance from the life and thought of E. Stanley Jones. I myself have recently read his latest book, *The Christ of the American Road*. Here, as always when one comes into contact with Dr. Jones, it is to discover a great modern prophet of God pleading with the people to whom it is bidden to preach, to press forward to the high calling for which our Jewish and Christian heritage insists we are created.

As I read this book I was especially impressed with Dr. Jones' emphasis upon Jesus Christ as the starting point for understanding God and his will for our lives today. As to understanding God through Jesus Christ, Dr. Jones says: "A man lived among us for three years (of his public ministry) and you can transfer every quality of character from him to God without lowering your estimate of God. . . . Indeed, you heighten your ideas of God when you think of him in terms of Christ." And for a true understanding of God's will for men, Dr. Jones points out that Jesus was for humanity something like the basic certainty that 2 plus 2 equals 4 in mathematics or like the fundamental scale in music. Mankind may build ever more complex and magnificent structures upon these elements of knowledge; in fact, only by building firmly upon them can architecture or music be what it is capable of being. "So in Jesus Christ," he insists, "we have struck a moral and spiritual ultimate—now we know what God is and what man may become. . . . To be a Christian is to respond to all the meanings you find in Christ."

### 'IF I BE LIFTED UP'

This basic formula both of divinity and of humanity at its best is what I want to consider with you today. And I have chosen to weave my thoughts together around the amazing words of Jesus: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Amazing words, I say, primarily because Jesus and Jesus alone could put himself at the center of such a conception of God-inspired existence. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," says Jesus, and even Napoleon, with his self-centered attitude toward France and the hoped-for European Federation under his leadership, frankly admitted that Jesus' authority was far greater than his own. "My authority," said Napoleon at the height of his power, "ends where the authority of conscience begins." And he paid high tribute to Jesus' moral power over the world's mil-

lions whom he—Napoleon—had failed to win to his cause.

How marvelous but how true—that with all our progress in material and cultural things in the past two millenniums, no spiritual or moral progress has been made beyond the supreme authority of Jesus Christ. Harold Phillips says, in his little volume of sermons on *Life's Unanswered Questions,* that whereas ordinary and even extraordinary men's lives are like pebbles which, dropped into a pool, create outgoing ripples that grow less and less distinct as they move away from their origin, with Jesus just the reverse is true. "With the passage of the years since Jesus' death," says Dr. Phillips, "the impact of his character on human history has gained both in size and in power." Consequently, whereas in times past there have been those daring to challenge the spiritual and moral verities for which Jesus lived, increasingly universal in a world shaken and shattered by its own perversity is the recognition that Jesus above all others of history had the right to say, "I and the Father are One."

Hear the word that Jesus spake
Eighteen centuries ago,
Where the crimson lilies blow
Round the blue Tiberian lake:
There the bread of life he brake,
Through the fields of harvest walking,
With his lowly comrades talking
Of the secret thoughts that feed
Weary hearts in time of need.
Art thou hungry? Come and take;
Hear the word that Jesus spake.
'Tis the sacrament of labor, meat and drink divinely blest;
Friendship's food and sweet refreshment, strength and courage, joy and rest.*

### THE WAY TO ETERNAL LIFE

This then, for our day as well as for the disciples of old, is the true starting point for life at its best; and we, like Peter in those days, cry out in hope and joy: "To whom else shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Eternal life? Eternal life! "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. . . . The Kingdom of God is within you. . . . Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. . . . Look up and lift up, for your salvation is nigh. . . . For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

It is the greatest of all tragedies that, in spite of Jesus' clear teaching that he expected his disciples and followers to become the salt of the earth whereby all mankind should be salted with his savor, the light of the world whereby all through him should be lighted, Christianity soon became not a ferment but a fire-escape. Thinking more of their own poor souls than of the divine fellowship to be achieved for the blessing of all, they twisted Jesus' assurance of God's love into a talisman of good luck against some fearful day of judgment, a promise of heavenly bliss if one but carried a crucifix or breathed the Savior's name at time of death. Men failed to see that in taking upon himself the form of a man, Jesus was endowing humanity with a dignity and a divinity to which all could aspire in the providence of God. Yet to save their own skins his superstitious followers began to act exactly like the fearful man in the Master's own parable—the man who wrapped his talent in a napkin and buried it in the ground to await the return of his lord. Jesus, they have insisted, has left the world he came to save, not to return until some far off time when he shall come again to judge, to reward and to punish. Meanwhile they have continued to this day to lay away even the treasured bodies of their departed loved ones in this same awesome spirit, fearful that moth and rust might corrupt and thieves break through and steal.

### THE MOST AUTHENTIC WORD

All this in spite of the greatest of all miracles: the experience of Christ's disciples on Easter morning and the awareness of their own hearts that eternal life meant glorious, living triumph over all the ills of life and even over death itself. "He is not here; he is risen," is the most authentic word that angels ever addressed to the hearts of men. For this is what Jesus meant when he assured his followers that he would "be lifted up from the earth"—"the first fruits," says Paul, "of those who have been asleep." Jesus had no disdain for the world in which he himself was born an infant meek and mild and in which he grew up in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. But, in praying that his disciples might be *in* the world yet not *of* the world, he was "lifting life up" to an eternal quality of which humanity until that hour had never dreamed.

"Ashes to ashes and dust to dust" is not the central theme of the Christian faith, for Jesus insisted that "life is more than food and the body more than raiment." It was from Henry van Dyke's "The Lost Word of Jesus" that I quoted a stanza some moments back: "Hear the word that Jesus spake, eighteen centuries ago." The word of life, life high and lifted up, eternal life for all who will truly follow him—it was to this divine concept of life's possibilities both on the earth and in the world to come that the Master called his disciples and all who might hear and heed.

Yet—Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem—but they *would not*—would not listen in his day, nor for long centuries thereafter. And Dr. van Dyke likens the deadness of our hearts to the burial of the treasures of past civilizations in the long undisturbed tombs of antiquity:

Yet this word the Master said,
Long ago and far away,
Silent and forgotten lay,
Buried with the silent dead—
Where the sands of Egypt spread,
Sea-like, tawny billows heaping,
Over ancient cities sleeping;
While the River Nile between
Rolls its summer flood of green,

*From "The Lost Word of Jesus," by Henry van Dyke. Used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Rolls its autumn flood of red.
There the word the Master said,
Written on a frail papyrus, scorched by fire, wrinkled, torn,
Hidden in God's hand, was waiting for its resurrection morn.

### *THE GREAT DREAM OF MANKIND*

For Jesus was not only the first-fruits of those who have gone to their eternal home with God but the prototype of that which God is creating to his honor and glory "on earth as it is in heaven." Thus "in Jesus," says Stanley Jones, "there came into convergence two great streams of historic human longing: the longing for a new and a better order of society, and a longing for a leader," a leader great enough to bring this new and brotherly order into existence.

Are we any closer to realizing that new order today than men were in Jesus' day? Yes, I think we are. For, whereas then this dream and this passion were held only in the hearts of a few men in the hills of Galilee, today the fellowship of believers embraces millions of men and women of all classes and races throughout the earth, and even on occasions shapes the destinies of great industries and of nations whose leaders recognize their authority as deriving from the God and Father of all mankind.

"God has made us for himself," in his own image and for the realization of his great purpose; and that purpose cannot fail if God be what Jesus says he is. Moreover, if—as we believe—Jesus is a spark of that Celestial Fire sent to ignite the hearts of men to burning passion for God's purpose, Jesus *is* destined to draw all men in righteousness, justice and brotherly love unto himself. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." And Jesus' words are quite as unequivocal: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Sooner or later humanity, after following all the other ways of bitter expediency, will in disillusionment and penitence be ready to hear and to heed the Eternal Words of Life which the Lord God has vouchsafed through the centuries: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbor as thyself." Then

Hear the Master's risen word!
Delving spades have set it free,—
Wake! the world has need of thee,—
Rise and let thy voice be heard,
Like a fountain disinterred;
Upward springing, singing, sparkling;
Through the doubtful shadows darkling;
Till the clouds of pain and rage,
Brooding o'er the toiling age,
As with rifts of light are stirred
By the music of the word:
Gospel for the heavy laden, answer to the laborer's cry,—
"Raise the stone and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I."

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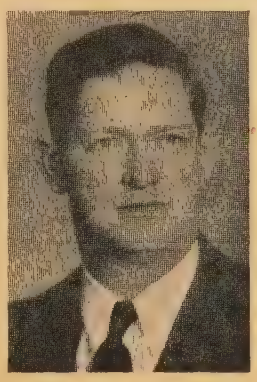
No eighteenth century doctrine about entangling foreign alliances will serve us now. We *are* entangled: for the duration, not of the war, but of mankind.

PAUL SCHERER.

# The Message of the Manger

By Alvin D. Johnson

BENEATH the chancel of the Yale Divinity School Chapel is a plain, undecorated Prayer Room. The bare walls in the octangular room rise to a height of thirty feet unbroken except for two small windows near the top. These admit a subdued light which falls on straight-backed chairs and a small metal cross. Occasional noises heard from without seem far away and unreal; peace clings to this room as the noiseless fog to a river. The spirit of God moves in that secluded place.



As one walks along the corridor leading to the Prayer Chapel, he becomes conscious that his shadow which at first was so big and even grotesque has become smaller and smaller until at the entrance it is scarcely normal size. This phenomenon is caused by the single light at the beginning of the long hall. Is this not symbolic of the change which goes on within a man as he approaches the place of worship? Leaving behind the world where the criterion is size, might, pride and noise, he shrinks to his normal size in the presence of purity, goodness and truth. The criterion at the shrine of worship is humility, quietness, meekness and surrender. The self, puffed up with pride, undergoes a change even as the shadow assumes its rightful proportions at the entrance to the Prayer Chapel.

### *A CALL TO QUIETNESS*

At this Christmas season men and women approach the manger where Jesus was born. As they near the sacred place, their blustering, noisy lives become quiet. Greed for power is stilled; their grasping for the world's goods is momentarily halted. They are humble and reverent before the goodness and purity in the manger. They see themselves as they are. They are weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a popular method of telling the nativity story was by means of the mystery plays. One of these plays in the Townley collection is "The Second Shepherd's Play." One is amazed to see the intermingling of crude humor and deep and tender reverence. Perhaps the one heightens the effect of the other. For example, there is the "humorous situation of the knavish shepherd who robs his honest colleagues of a sheep, and tries to pass it off as his own child in its cradle." No doubt the unlettered people for whom these plays were acted were not too fussy about the intermixture of profane and divine elements. Such a humorous background does bring out the effect of the Christ Child upon these boisterous, swaggering shepherds. We see them as they approach

the manger. A great change comes over them. The swaggering and boastful exterior falls away from them, and they stand before the babe in silence and humility. These crude, uncouth men are awkward and ashamed before such purity and truth. They give the Christ Child simple presents; they have no frankincense, no gold, no myrrh. From hearts touched and softened by the Presence they make their humble gifts—truly, a supreme act of worship.

### THE SUPREME MIRACLE

Christian people come to the manger this season. We come, even as the shepherds of old, with awe. Awe that the Almighty God could send his Son to earth—the supreme miracle of God and man joined. The wonder that the eternal and the temporal are so closely bound. There is awe when we contemplate that day of long ago.

Awe is a product of fear and love; it combines attractiveness and repulsiveness; it draws and still it repels. It catches one in an emotional vise and squeezes out humility and penitence.

Such an emotional experience I had several years ago while viewing a dramatic presentation of the nativity in Radio City. Christmas music was sung by a great choir. Voices and organ music filled the great hall in a mounting ecstasy of sound. Lights became brighter and brighter. When organ and choir had reached a sweeping crescendo, suddenly with a brilliant flash of light and crash of music two mammoth doors swung open, and there before our eyes was the manger scene. The ear drums vibrated to the exultant "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come." The choir, the organ, the lights and the sudden appearing of the manger scene produced upon the audience a feeling of awe. We were overwhelmed and yet entranced by the apparent marvel which had happened before us. Here before our eyes had been portrayed the miracle of God's sending his Son into the world. It was frightening, and yet there was an irresistible attraction about it. We were startled into a new appreciation of the dramatic event which changed the course of history so long ago. We were humbled and penitent before God's supreme act.

Standing before the manger in awe and humility and penitence, let us examine what the message of the manger is for us today.

### PURITY AND JOY

It says to us as it said to the shepherds then—purity *is,* and will be throughout eternity. We all view the temporary innocence in the eyes of small children. Christ was born and remained pure. We know that no taint of the world spotted him. We know that he overcame the world; that he never sold his soul for the greed of money—nor to the lusts of the flesh; nor did he make himself prisoner to envy and strife. The message of the manger is this—we can be pure through his power. The message of the manger is this—we can overcome the world even as he overcame the world.

The message of the manger is joy—not a superficial happiness based on avoiding the issues, but rather the joy that is wrung from pain and sorrow and loneliness. See this same babe thirty-three years later hanging on the cross, still confident in the shadow of death that nothing could separate him from the joy of the fellowship with God. See him taken from the cross a bruised, broken man; his cause lost, his disciples scattered, his life snuffed out by hate and injustice. But that is not the end, only the beginning; for joy is born in sorrow and life in death.

### COURAGE AND FAITH

The message of the manger is courage and faith. When did the world need such a message more than in our day? When have we needed courage to face life more than now? When have we needed courage to face death more than in the present? Has there been a time in history when men needed a working faith more than now? When in history has faith in goodness, and right, and justice been more severely tested? When, if not now, has faith been so sorely tried—faith that love will ultimately triumph over hate, that justice will dethrone injustice, that right will be the victor over might? "We see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." "Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." Faith in a dependable God, an almighty, loving God, is the message of the manger.

The message of the manger is peace. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The peace of the Christ Child is a paradoxical truth, for his peace is within strife, his calm is in the midst of turmoil. The message is yours if you will but accept it.

### 'FOR GOD SO LOVED'

The message of the manger is sacrifice. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth him should not perish but have everlasting life." Giving not hoarding, casting your bread upon the waters, losing your life—the crux of the religious life is here in sacrifice. Make this message yours today.

Come to the manger, you who are sorrowful; there is a message of joy for you there, a fierce, untamed, unconquered joy.

Come to the manger, you who have lost heart and whose faith lags; there is a message of courage and faith for you there.

Come to the manger, you who long for peace, for there you will receive a peace that passeth understanding.

Come to the manger, you who desire the secret of life, for there you will receive the message of sacrifice.

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I AM DONE with great things and big things, great institutions and big successes, and I am for those tiny, invisible, molecular, moral forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like soft rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, yet which, if you give them time, will rend the hardest monuments of man's pride.

WILLIAM JAMES.

# The Refuge of the Devout

By Gordon W. Mattice

*Scripture: 91st Psalm.*

YEARS AGO, when I was a boy, it was my great joy to spend my summers on my uncle's farm over in Canada. Like any city boy, I greatly enjoyed farm life for a season, and found many interesting things to do. I always liked the time when the wheat became ripe for the cutting, and marveled at the machine which would cut and bundle the sheaves of wheat. My job was to walk behind the binder and as the bundles came off the machine to stand them up in the field. Usually the binder worked, but sometimes the cord did not hold, and I had to tie a piece around a bundle so it would stand up and keep in its place. My uncle was a very ordinary farmer, yet he was a philosopher after a fashion. When we would have to tie a cord around a bundle he would say, "Yep, that's like life—got to tie it together, got to have something to hold it up."

Until recent years most of us have been able to stand up without too much difficulty; we have had security in which we rejoiced, we have been propped up by established things, have been tied together by some external ties that bound us in the bundle of life. There was a certain cohesion which served to hold things—and life—together.

### WHY DO WE WORRY?

But what do we face today? Do the former securities, the previous coherent situations, the familiar supporting backgrounds serve now as they did then? Is not many an individual thrown back upon himself? Dr. Fosdick comments that we commonly say that this shattering of old security causes our disintegration, but the truth is that it reveals the disorder already there. We never had been deeply and strongly well organized within. We have been like a sheaf of wheat—when the tie broke we fell apart because we had never been held vitally together. This is another way of saying that we have not developed adequate spiritual resources.

Nine times out of ten what causes us to break down is an external strain plus a sense of internal inadequacy to meet it. Now let this apparent fact confront each one of us personally. What is it that you and I are really worrying about? Is it not that we fear we shall not be able to hold out? We wonder if our rootage will hold. If we knew that we had deep roots to stand the tempests that blow across our lives, our morale would not be shaken. Quoting Dr. Fosdick again: he says that some of us are like cisterns—we are good as far as we go; we have our uses, but we cannot count on ourselves; the sources of our supply are superficial; our reserves are limited; we cannot stand a prolonged drought. But some men are like artesian wells, with resources that run deep, not at the mercy of transient circumstance. As Jesus said, "The water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up."

Now if such an experience of unfailing interior supply is possible, we need it. What is our refuge? How shall we meet this situation? I challenge you to name any literature which surpasses the book of Psalms in addressing itself to this contemporary need. Can you think of any book which gives more assurance and courage than this one to which people have turned again and again? And has any devout seeker ever failed to find there what he sought?

One of the positive values of this day has been our deepened awareness of our need of God, and all of us are discovering new joy and blessing in opening our lives to receive him.

### A FAVORITE PSALM

The 91st Psalm is the favorite of many people, and we do not wonder at that. Here we find the voice of a devout man affirming his trust in God. In this psalm we have the language of a man praising God. It is essentially a confession of faith. "God is my refuge, and my fortress; My God, in whom I trust."

One of the men of our congregation whom I miss most keenly is Edward King. Always faithful in attendance here, a great reader and a true saint, he would frequently pass to me slips of paper on which he had made notes. A few months before he died, on one of the last Sundays he was able to attend church, he gave me a paper on which he had noted some thoughts on this psalm. It read: "Psalm 91 - - a secret place in the altitudes. Secure from petty annoyances with none to molest or alarm; a divine manifestation to give courage; a wonderful shelter to abide under to disperse our fears, to strengthen our hope; a resolution of confidence; a place of security in time of need; a place of hiding from the enemy; to enlarge our vision, remove our doubts, assure us of peace, bring us out of our depressions; to manifest God's love, give us the victory over wrong motives; to fit us for a higher sphere of living, and to equip us for service."

### 'NO PLAGUE SHALL COME NIGH'

The psalmist, after he makes his affirmation of faith, goes on to catalogue the blessings he receives from God. He makes these personal possessions.

The word "refuge" is a picture word. As it is uttered there leaps into the mind the vision of a strong fortress, a place of security, shelter and protection. As if a man should say: "Lord, I am hunted by such temptation, doubt and fear - - I am plagued all the day. Castle me in the arms of they everlasting strength. Into thy hands I commit myself." God never denies a request like that.

There is a verse here that has puzzled many a devout

student of the psalm: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." I suppose there is some reference here to the old story of Israel's exemption from the Egyptian plagues, and a hint that that might be taken as a parable and a prophetic picture of what will be true of everyone who puts his trust in God. But there is a paradox here—the promise is, "no plague shall come nigh..." yet we are smitten down by all the plagues that rage through our world. Is God speaking fact here? I believe that the psalmist is saying essentially what St. Paul affirmed centuries later: "All things work together for good to them that love God." If I make God my refuge I shall get something a great deal better than escape from outward ills—an amulet which will enable me to handle things, to stand upon my feet and fear not. The secret of exemption from every evil lies in no particular, ordered in some special manner outward circumstance, but in cleaving to him as our refuge. Nothing can be evil which knits me closer to him.

It is at this point that the deepest need in us—that for refuge and strength—meets the deepest fact in Christianity—that God is ever present to help, to guide and to guard. If today in our living these two could be brought together, the result might change the course of many a life. Surely it is clear that such reliable resources of inner spiritual power are a deep need in us. The psalmist testifies that he found it in God. All of us here believe in God, but have we made an affirmation of faith as did the psalmist? Can you honestly say, "The Lord is my refuge, my God, in whom I trust"? Many people, it is to be feared, never experience this profoundest fact in their faith. Let us seek to speak with the accent of genuine experience. Let us learn to say, "The Lord is my refuge."

### *TRUSTING IN THE WRONG THINGS*

This psalm abounds in figures of speech: "Upon the lion and adder you may tread; the dragon thou shalt trample under foot." The lion symbolizes the big and evident things that send us into panic; the adder those slimy forces under the grass, those subtle things not readily evident until we are right upon them; the dragon, the creature of the imagination. Someone has pointed out that there is a difference between an opponent and an enemy. An opponent does his work out in the open, and you are able to resist him—like a lion in your path; but an enemy, like a snake, does its work in the dark. Our fevered imaginations, stimulated by war dispatches, by lists of names in the newspapers, sometimes plague our peace! How shall we handle these? What will make us able to meet them? Faith in God gives us the adequacy to deal with them.

Let me go back to the illustration with which I began. A sheaf of wheat stands because there is an outward force holding it together; if that breaks it goes to pieces. We have trusted in outward things to hold us together; they have failed us in the hour of our great need: We need an inner force to pull us together and to hold us securely, and what is that inner force of cohesion but a firm belief in and a resolute trust in God?

A few years ago Dr. Henry C. Link wrote *The Return to Religion.* He testifies that as a practicing psychologist he found himself getting into the habit of sending distraught and troubled people to church. So he began going to church himself, and made some interesting discoveries about church people. In general he found that they were well-poised, courageous, cheerful, and able to meet the vicissitudes of life and not break down before them. The people who came to him were for the most part people who had nothing within to give them strength. They were like an army with no base of supplies; like a ship that had no home port; like a light bulb without a fixture. What wonder that they failed!

### *OUR DEPENDABLE RESOURCES*

But the man of faith has resources upon which he can draw, as we draw upon our savings in the bank when we need more money than we have in hand. The man of faith can reach out and touch a power greater than himself. When the earth trembles, he can feel a foundation that sustains him, like everlasting arms of great strength. His faith gives him a sense of security and therefore of permanency, which lifts all despair from his heart and mind.

Friends, here we are today—all of us facing wants that the will cannot meet; discovering that we have been wrongly organized and need therefore to be remade; everyday confronting the strains and fears of a disordered world. What then if, out of this felt need, there should arise within each one of us the spirit and power of an abundant faith which can affirm, "The Lord is my refuge!" The man of faith is adequately equipped to face this world now and to help to build a better one in the days ahead.

Let us, each one, abide in the Eternal God by our hearts, by the affiance of our faith, by the submission of our wills, by the aspiration of our yearnings, and by the conformity of our conduct to his will. Thus shall we be able to say: "He who dwells under the shelter of the Most High, who abides under the shadow of the Almighty, says of the Lord: My Refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

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# 'This Was a Man'

**By George A. Frantz***

FOR more than seven days the whole world has stood with uncovered and bowed head around this casket. The uncorrupted instinct for true greatness—an instinct of all men everywhere—has given unanimous suffrage that "This was a Man."

But it is not enough for us that we should see a whole world one in homage to him. We, the people of his own state and community, who knew him best and so love him most, bring now our thanksgiving that God gave him first to us. As our local waters, falling from heaven, are given to the great river, and

*From the sermon preached at the funeral service of Wendell Willkie in Rushville, Ind., by Dr. Frantz, minister of First Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, Ind.

thence to the ocean, so God gave him to us; we gave him to the nation, and the nation gave him to the world.

It is no minor miracle that a man from our inland tranquility should, in the purpose of God, hear the cry of all the races of men for justice and for peace. He heard the cry and answered.

This man taught us to think, not only continentally, but universally. He educated America in foreign affairs. There were no points of the compass in his love for democracy, or in his confidence in the people. He believed in God, and in man made in the image of God. From this belief flowed his optimism—an undiminished and refreshing stream. And the common people hearing him found hope springing up again in their hearts.

An ambassador of the peoples of the world, he went abroad, an honest man telling the truth about his country for the good of all the nations. He knew the seasons, when to take occasion by the hand and make the bounds of freedom wider yet.

And in that day—that good day when the unity of the world shall stand, radiant as white-handed justice, beneficent as brotherhood—if men ask, "Where is his monument?" let them but look around at a world one in integrity like his own; one in courage like his; one in a fiery faith in democracy such as burned in him; one in a passionate dedication to freedom like that which consumed him. Let this then suffice as his monument.

He pledged his heart to the people, and its steady throb is still beating out our hopes for the future. His work is God's work. God buries his workers. God's work goes on.

It is hard to lose him. And we shall vehemently desire him in the day of battle. It is hard to lose such a man, citizen, friend, neighbor, brother. It is hard to lose such a husband, such a father. But it is easier, because we lose him to the Immortals.

Now Indiana's great son has come home to stay. His family and friends have his love forever. His fellow citizens have his deathless loyalty. His native and beloved soil has his body. His spirit is abroad and mighty in the world; his soul goes marching on.

> Under the wide and starry sky,
> Dig the grave and let me lie;
> Glad did I live and gladly die,
> And I laid me down with a will.
> This be the verse you grave for me:
> "Here he lies, where he longed to be;
> Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
> And the hunter home from the hill."

"The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." And so shall he be forever with the Lord.

# The Boy and the Bell

**A Christmas Story for Youth by Stanley Armstrong Hunter**

IT ALL BEGAN with the invalid son of the village blacksmith, back in another century when Europe was experiencing a long war. From his bed in the upper room of a gabled home in the village nestling under a great mountain, he loved to watch his friends on their way to church dressed in their Sunday best. It worried him that some came late, so he talked this over with the pastor when he called.

"If only once again we had a bell," the white-haired pastor said. "Then surely all would try to come on time. Many are too poor to own clocks. If this dreadful war would come to an end, we might be able to buy a bell somewhere. But metal is so scarce that I don't know where we could find one, even if we could afford it."

Ulrich knew that soldiers had searched the village for metal for bullets for their muskets. They had even stripped lead from the roof of the church and the drains under the eaves.

Ulrich asked his father, the blacksmith, how bells were made. He told him of the many difficulties, how the mold had to be of exactly the right shape to secure a satisfactory tone for the bell, the curve in the design being not only for beauty but for the best sound. The height should be twelve times the thickness. The right proportion of metals had to be planned—there should be copper and tin in the proportion of four to one. After melting, the molten mixture had to be poured rapidly and sometimes a crack would appear in the bell if it did not cool correctly.

The father remembered a smith in the town under whom he had learned his skill long ago who knew all the secrets. If only he could visit him . . .

The next Sunday the villagers in church heard the pastor explain the plan suggested by the little boy. The blacksmith agreed to make the long trip to the town to learn the secret of casting the bell. Then everyone was to contribute metal. The plan depended on everyone's having a part in it. The bell would be ready for Christmas if all went well.

Before sunset, at the appointed time, the villagers started to their beloved church, each bringing something for the offering. You can imagine the excitement.

As the plates were passed, there were coins of various lands, some keepsakes and treasures, but also the strangest assortment of metal articles, varying from lead toys to copper candlesticks. Arranged before the altar as they were brought up, they made an impressive offering. When all sang the Doxology as the congregation in John Calvin's church at Geneva had sung it first, joy and thanksgiving and gratitude abounded.

As the pastor offered the prayer of dedication he thanked God for the idea of the little boy and prayed

for his recovery. Then he told the people that the bell belonged to everyone. "As you hear its peal," he declared, "remember that it calls to each one, 'Come to worship.' You are to think, 'It is my bell and it is speaking to me.' "

Next morning the blacksmith began to carry out his carefully thought out plan. After arranging the articles according to the metal, he was confident that the result would be satisfactory. The choice of the Bible reference to be marked on the bell was left to Ulrich. He turned to the Book of Psalms and stopped at "O Come, Let us Worship."

### 'O COME, LET US WORSHIP'

The suggestions of the bell caster were scrupulously observed. After the casting of the molten metal Ulrich could hardly wait until the bell should be tested for its tone. His father and a friend carried it to the pump in front of his window where he could see and hear. Tears came to his eyes when the clanger was attached and the sound was clean and sweet.

It was Christmas Eve when the work of hanging the bell was completed. A hole was bored through the ceiling of the vestibule for the bell rope. The pastor surprised the blacksmith by telling him that Ulrich should have the honor of ringing the bell for the first time as it called the villagers to worship. "We will carry the bed downstairs and as he lies on it his arm can pull the rope," said the pastor.

Ulrich was bursting with excitement when he heard this. He could hardly sleep that night for happiness. He felt the muscles of his arms to see if they were strong enough to pull the rope, and to himself he seemed stronger than he had been since his long illness. He knew that he would not fail. His legs were still very thin, but for some time now he had been able to move his toes. Could he really stand and walk? As he remembered the prayers of the pastor and the people for his recovery a strange idea took hold of him that Christmas was the day when he should take his first steps again, for the necessary months that the doctor had told him must be given over to rest were now passed.

He smiled confidently as loving hands carried him on his bed to the church vestibule. He awaited the hour with jubilation. When the pastor finally said, "Now you may ring the bell, my son," he was overjoyed. Sitting upright, he pulled the rope, once, twice, three times. "O Come, Let Us Worship," he said with every pull.

"O Come, Let Us Worship," said the bell. "Everyone—young and old, rich and poor, boy and girl, man and wife—everyone . . ."

They were gathering outside the door now. He could hear them as they came for their Christmas service. "Pastor," he called, "help me up. The bell has called me to worship too. My legs can take me to my seat if you will only help me."

### WAS IT A MIRACLE?

The villagers pouring into the church, seeing him, asked: "Is it not a miracle? Ulrich can walk again!"

And so he could. Little by little his strength returned. He was proud to ring the bell. He loved to hear the echoes from the cliff, seeming to say, "O come, let us worship." Every Sunday every seat was now filled and the villagers were proud to stand when visitors came.

As the story spread throughout the valleys, people came from afar to visit the church and to see the bell. The wood carver made miniature copies in the form of paper weights that tourists bought and took to their homes across the seas. Later a skilled metal worker settled in the village and he made reproductions in the form of dinner bells, engraving always the text from the Psalter. Thus the story of the Boy and the Christmas Bell was often told, and the faithfulness at worship of the villagers was remembered.

# A Pastoral Prayer

By Charles Henry Schmitz

O GOD, our Father, at this Christmastide we come through the oneness of our faith to Thee. We thank Thee for Thy longsuffering toward the children of men. We humbly bow before Thy presence and plead forgiveness for a world of ill will when Thou didst through Thy Son bid us have good will. Speak to our hearts through these warring times, and grant that within each of us first of all there may come a just and durable peace which in turn may be found among the nations of the world.

We would know Jesus. Thou who didst dwell so deeply in him, find Thy way into the inner recesses of our lives. Make Thy home within us, for we would know Thee as our continuing, ever present Creator. Come to us as Thou didst come to Thy Son, that our lives too may make a difference in this sorry world.

Father, come to us at the beginning of our days, that finding Thee then we may find Thee also in later days of stern responsibilities and pressing activities, and when our earthly lives are done. Help us to lead our lives in accordance with Thy will, as we look upon such goodness as was found in Jesus, Thy Son. Say to us this day, that he was "the first born among many brethren."

We pray for those who at this Christmastide feel most keenly the wounds of separation. Comfort those who serve our country in its time of distress; keep them through temptations and dangers seen or unseen. May the bond of the Spirit of Thy Son be with us all. Through the Master's name we pray. Amen.

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Pleune, Peter H.: "The Carpenter" (September)
Schooley, Henry H.: "Aero-Bugs" (November)
Tyson, R. J.: "Freight Cars or Engines?" (August)


## Book of the Month


Anderson, William K.: "Protestantism—A Symposium" (June)
Craig, Clarence Tucker: "The Beginning of Christianity" (January)
Freeman, Harrop A.: "Peace Is the Victory" (August)
Grant, Frederick C.: "Can We Still Believe in Immortality?" (October)
Hodgson, Leonard: "The Doctrine of the Trinity" (July)
Lowrie, Walter: "The Short Story of Jesus" (April)
Luccock, Halford E.: "In the Minister's Workshop" (September)
Smith, Roy H.: "It Happened Once Before" (December)
Sockman, Ralph W.: "Date With Destiny" (May)
Steere, Douglas V.: "On Beginning from Within" (February)
Thomas, George F.: "The Vitality of the Christian Tradition" (March)
Trueblood, D. Elton: "The Predicament of Modern Man" (November)


## Pastoral Prayers


Ashworth, Robert A. (February)
Hahn, Herbert W. (June)
Helfenstein, Roy C. (March)
Hutchinson, John W. (November)
McGee, Clyde (May)
Palmer, Everett W. (September)
Perkins, James Croswell (August)
Schmitz, C. D. (December)
Thomas, Winburn T. (July)
Tittle, Ernest Fremont (January)
Willett Herbert L. (April)
Yeaple, Whitney S. (October)



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# Neglected Aspects of Ministerial Ethics

By McIlyar Hamilton Lichliter

FORTY YEARS ago it was the custom for many of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church to talk frankly with the young ministers who were to be received into the Conference. Among other things, various problems in the field of ministerial ethics were discussed, although this part of the address was devoted largely to matters of etiquette.

Those entering the ministry were exhorted to pay rigid attention to personal cleanliness and immaculate dress. They were told not to cross their legs while sitting on a platform or in the chancel. Both feet were to be kept firmly and gracefully on the floor! They were to stop fiddling with the hymnal, and to keep their hands away from their faces and out of their pockets. "Blessed words" were to be avoided, and all mannerisms or gestures which might direct attention to themselves.

Then the bishop turned to weightier matters of the law—to promptness in answering letters, paying bills, and keeping appointments. He discouraged false ideas of good fellowship which involved back-slapping and the telling of questionable stories. Finally, with great solemnity, attention was directed to the dangerous reefs of intemperance and sex.

Those who grew up in the ministry under this system recall with gratitude the helpfulness of such commonsense counsel. Plain speaking was needed, and it was appreciated. Something very tangible for the enrichment of personality was achieved by such a practical merger of etiquette and ethics. One wonders at times whether there is not a real need for the same sort of thing today. May there not be a vital connection between good manners and good conduct?

Incidentally, it ought to be said that in recent years there has been marked progress in understanding the human situation. In earlier times, if a minister strayed into By-Path Meadow or faced some serious ethical collapse, he was disciplined and often summarily dismissed. There seemed to be more concern for the purging of the church than for the saving of the man. Happily, a deeper ethical insight puts the emphasis upon rehabilitation. Today there is a tendency to ask "Why?," to understand sympathetically what made the man fall, and to provide, if at all possible, for his continued usefulness if his own attitude warrants this act of mercy. The honor of the church has a way of taking care of itself. The salvaging of character and the rebuilding of reputation are matters of paramount concern.

This finer understanding of the human situation has also uncovered certain neglected areas of ministerial ethics. Phases of the minister's professional relationships, too often taken for granted or ignored, are now considered in the light of ethical obligation.

M. H. Lichliter

## ● *The Minister and His Successor*

Something more culpable than bad manners often characterizes a minister's relation to his successor. It is a fundamental breach of ethics when one handicaps the man who follows him in the parish. It may not be deliberate or conscious, but it is always embarrassing, irritating, and sometimes tragic.

Consider, by way of example, a most unhappy situation in one New England community where the older minister stayed on in the parish after his resignation. There was a good reason. He owned his own home; for more than thirty years he had been minister of this church; he was a leader in all community affairs. He was, and still is, a very able preacher and had been a conscientious pastor.

He retired—but he would not quit. The church called a young man as his successor, a man of real promise and ability, but the older man continued to make pastoral visits and to give pastoral counsel. He took nearly all the weddings and most of the funerals as his right. He stood so squarely in the path of his successor that the young man did not have a chance. It created a situation of serious tension and resulted in a cleavage in the church.

One wishes that this were an exception. It happens so frequently, and in so many denominations, that its ethical implications need to be faced with candor. When one resigns to accept another church, or to retire from the parish ministry, he is certainly under moral obligations to keep hands off. It is not only a thoughtful courtesy, but a matter of simple justice to the new man, not to make any commitments whatever for weddings or funerals except under extraordinary personal circumstances and unless there is a clear mutual understanding. When one moves, he should have the grace to stay away. If he is deficient in this quality, he should be confronted with his disregard of ethical obligations.

The older minister is inclined to protest. "Must I sacrifice old friendships on the altar of ministerial courtesy?" By no means! One may keep the bridge of friendship in repair and, for many years, feel the joy of pleasant personal contacts. All that is demanded is that he shall not, in any way, handicap his successor.

The ethical imperative, in every change in pastoral relations, is that the new minister be left free to do his work in his own way, to make whatever changes he wants to make provided he has the full cooperation of his laymen, and to give a new and, perhaps, revolutionary focus to the life of the church.

It is true that this may involve a decisive break with the tradition of the local church and the former minister may wonder whether his own zealous regard for tradition was futile. He must realize that the tradition of the church is within its own keeping, and that it is not the concern of any minister old or new. If, under new leadership, the church decides to make what appears to be a decided break with tradition, that is its own affair. It is often a sign of corporate health and a mark of progress. Sometimes it is the reverse.

What can be done when a man makes trouble for his successor? Obviously, it would be unfair to ask the incoming minister to assume the burden of adjustment, or to voice whatever protest ought to be made. This is a problem which the laymen of the church must solve in all kindness, but with unmistakable firmness. If

the former minister lacks sensitiveness enough to appraise the situation, the laymen should act decisively.

There is, to be sure, another and quite obvious thing that must be said. The fine ethical attitude which should condition the relation of the retiring minister to his successor, should guide the new man in his relation to his predecessor. He can find many ways of making known his appreciation of others who have stood in his pulpit without being fulsome or insincere. He can render a fraternal service by refusing to listen to criticisms of his predecessor, and certainly, by an unwillingness to pass on any disparaging comment. The cheapest kind of pathological exhibitionism is to try to lift one's self into influence by open or subtle disparagement of men who have gone before.

### ● *The Minister and His Associate*

A few years ago, at a gathering of ministers and their wives, a brilliant young associate minister in an influential church read a witty paper on "The Associate Minister." He said, in plain words, what many assistant ministers have felt in their hearts, and after a rather caustic survey of the duties and functions of the office, he closed with these impressive words: "God help the associate minister!"

There is a reason for such a prayer. A great deal of ethical confusion has resulted because the relationship has not been clearly defined. This may not be the fault of either of the ministers. The blame may lie at the door of the committee which called the associate. It is not always, therefore, a problem of ministerial ethics. It may be bad business judgment.

The associate minister has a right to understand the division of responsibility, what opportunities he will have in the pulpit, what freedom will be given him in parish work or in the field of religious education. It is fatally easy for a well-trained associate minister to become the errand boy of the parish. What will be his standing in the community? May he expect to participate in the solution of parish problems?

The most serious ethical dilemma arises when an associate minister is called with the tacit understanding that he is to succeed the minister in charge. Tacit understandings are like secret treaties. They break down at the first emergency. Whatever may be said of the international scene, it is imperative that, in the relation of the minister and his associate, both should be governed by open covenants openly arrived at.

Under the tacit understanding system, it is inevitable that the younger man should ask, as one layman put it: "When is the old codger going to quit?" And if the "old codger" hears about it, he will need what the Methodists call "entire sanctification" to face the situation.

What is meant by contractual relations openly arrived at? It is not a difficult matter to define the relationship. What part will the associate have in the preaching ministry—if any? What is to be his term of service? What cooperation may he expect when he seeks a church of his own? If he has been chosen with the definite understanding that he is to succeed the senior minister—which is the world's worst way of securing a minister—then the approximate date of the change should be mutually understood.

### ● *The Dilemma of the Senior Minister*

A word should be said in behalf of the senior minister. Retirement is not always as easy as one might think. In most cases, the minister faces a financial problem. It has been impossible for him to lay aside enough to guarantee support. What will he retire on? Where will he retire to? In just such colloquial terms the senior minister faces a serious dilemma. Ordinarily, the pension he may expect is far from adequate. Is the church able to provide a generous allowance for the emeritus minister?

The personal outlook is much more significant than the financial problem. With a few exceptions, the minister facing retirement is fully aware that he has a lot of usefulness in him yet. The lighter task to which he would be happy to turn is not always available, except in a connectional system, and it is not invariably easy even there. Most local churches are never tempted to fail in consideration and thoughtfulness. Sometimes, however, these very splendid qualities actually stand in the way of a mutual understanding and a pledge of mutual cooperation which might make the ethical dilemma impossible.

In the delicate adjustments which every minister faces in the prospect of retirement, the situation is infinitely easier and happier if the whole matter, and all its bearings, can be talked out around a table with laymen who understand and who care.

### ● *The Minister and His Counselee*

Here is the most difficult problem in the entire field of ministerial ethics. It is the tragic weakness of the Protestant system. Beginning with the Emmanuel Movement under Elwood Worcester, there has been a rapid development of the function of pastoral counseling. It has become almost a specialty, requiring training in applied psychology, at least a superficial knowledge of medicine, and a mastery of the techniques of a counseling clinic. What is more serious, the Protestant confessional emerged without the training of the minister as a Roman priest is trained. What was meant to be an extension of one's pastoral efficiency often turned out to be an ethical disaster.

Unfortunately, there are ministers who cannot hold secret and inviolable what has been told them in confidence. They cannot resist the lure of the personal in sermon illustrations: "Last week a woman came to me and told me this story . . ." There are many in the congregation who will be able to identify the minister's visitor.

One of the most successful ministers in this field lost the confidence of one of his earlier parishes because, in books published in later years, he cited case records which his former parishioners instantly recognized—and resented.

The great pity is that the impulse to tell what ought to be a secret is a boomerang. It hurts the counselee, and it ruins the effectiveness of the counselor. In many instances, however, the minister is unjustly condemned when the publicity comes from other sources—and often from the counselee.

The one safe rule is secrecy and silence. No one, not even one's wife or one's closest friend, should know what has been confided to the minister under the seal of the Protestant confessional. That was a fine thing which Mr. Gladstone said one day of John Morley: "If there was a secret on which depended my own and my family's honor, I would trust it to this man without a moment's hesitation." That sort of ministerial counselor is a real cure of souls, and for such a minister the ethical dilemma does not exist.


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**The Pulpit**

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# • WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

*A son of the manse, Rev.* ORMAL L. MILLER spent five years as associate minister with Rev. Ernest Fremont Tittle at First Methodist Church, Evanston, Ill., and in 1932 became pastor of the University Methodist Church, Madison, Wis. Six years ago he accepted a call to his present charge, First Methodist, Topeka, Kan. He is a graduate of Hamline University and Garrett Biblical Institute.

*A graduate of Leland Stanford and Yale Divinity* School, Rev. HOWARD J. CONN pursued graduate work at Harvard. He has recently left his pastorate at Great Barrington, Conn., to become minister of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis, Minn.

*For the past nine years Rev.* ILION T. JONES *has* been minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City, also director of the Westminster Foundation connected with the University of Iowa. Earlier pastorates were in Corsicana and San Antonio, Texas. For three years he has been chairman of Presbyterian General Assembly's special committee on theological education. He received his later education at Trinity University, in Texas, and at McCormick Seminary and Columbia University, where he received B.D. and M.A. degrees.

*For many years (1924-41) a missionary in Japan,* Rev. THOBURN T. BRUMBAUGH was also director of the Wesley Foundation in Japan. He is now executive secretary of the Detroit Council of Churches. He is the author of *A Son of the Rising Sun—a Biography* and *Religious Values in Japanese Culture* and was editor of the *Japan Christian Year Book,* 1939-41. Dr. Brumbaugh lectures on Japan, the Orient, and the Christian Movement in the Far East. His later education was received at Ohio Wesleyan, Boston University School of Theology and Union Seminary.

*Rev.* ALVIN D. JOHNSON *has been pastor of the* Baptist Church in Rockville, Conn., for the past two years. He is a graduate of Mount Hermon School, Brown University and Yale Divinity School, and has followed special studies at Hartford Seminary.

*Since 1931 Rev.* GORDON W. MATTICE *has been* pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Rochester, N. Y. He is a graduate of New York University and the Biblical Seminary in New York, and pursued postgraduate study at Columbia and the University of Rochester.

*Rev.* CHARLES H. SCHMITZ *is minister of Calvary* Baptist Church, Syracuse, N. Y.

*Rev.* STANLEY A. HUNTER *is minister of First Pres*byterian Church, Berkeley, Calif.

*Rev.* M. H. LICHLITER, *after 42 years in the min*istry, resigned as minister of the First Congregational Church, Columbus, O., which he had served for 18 years. Now a resident of Boston, he is one of the three executives of the Supreme Council of thirty-third degree Masons. He is a frequent lecturer at theological seminaries and is summer minister for the union services in Newton, Mass. His article in this issue was read early this year before the Boston Ministers' Meeting.

# TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

HERBERT B. HUDNUT, Woodward Avenue Presbyterian, Detroit, Mich. "The Consecrated Nation." 1 Peter 2:9—"You are the consecrated nation, the People who belong to him." (Moffatt)

ROY A. BURKHART, Community Church, Columbus, O. "A Time Is Born." Luke 4:19, 19—"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of our Lord."

HARRY TAYLOR, Community Church, Jennings Lodge, Ore. "The Incredible May Happen." Lam. 4:12—"The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem."

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, First Presbyterian, Pittsburgh, Pa. "If I Were God." Psalm 115:2—"Where is now their God?" Ezek. 18:25—"The way of the Lord is not equal."

JAMES C. PERKINS, First Congregational, Niagara Falls, N. Y. "Christian Peace Aims." Rom. 14:19—"Let us aim at whatever makes for peace and mutual upbuilding of character." (Weymouth)

WILLIAM L. STEFFENS, St. Paul's Methodist, Toledo, O. "A Prophet Speaks to His Nation." Isa. 26:4—"Trust ye in Jehovah forever; for in Jehovah, even Jehovah, is an everlasting rock." Isa. 26:2—"Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth faith may enter in."

M. J. ENGELMANN, Calvary Community Church, Maywood, Ill. "A Declaration of Interdependence." Rom. 14:7a—"None of us liveth to himself."

SELDEN C. DICKINSON, JR. "Spiritual X-Rays." 1 Sam. 16:7—"The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

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*Title of sermon*

.....
*Text used (write out the text)*

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*Name of minister*

.....
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# The Editor's Page

## The Event of the Month

THAT a national election could be held in this country in the midst of a war and on the eve of victory, and that the result, though startlingly close in the popular vote, should be calmly accepted by the whole people, has drawn the amazed and admiring attention of the whole world to the vigor of our democratic institutions. It was no merely formal election. The campaign was perhaps the most intense in our history, so much so that the customary jubilation of the winning side gave place to a more solemn acceptance of success at the polls. The vast responsibility which Mr. Roosevelt and his party have assumed is great enough to temper any celebration. But this responsibility is deepened and intensified by the fact that Mr. Roosevelt took upon himself a role which no other President has been granted and many Presidents have voluntarily renounced. The fourth term issue was, no doubt, weakened in this campaign by the successful breaking down of the no-third-term tradition in 1940. The prevailing explanation of Mr. Roosevelt's reelection was the appeal of the argument against changing the commander-in-chief while the war was on. But next to this consideration was the emergence of organized labor as a solid political bloc under recognized leaders. Whether these leaders truly represent the best interests of the workers or are leading the "revolt of the masses" away from democracy to an order whose ultimate fruit will be some form of dictatorship, only time will tell. Perhaps the "planned economy" which is their goal may be made to work in this country without sacrificing democratic freedom, but in other countries it has borne the fruit of totalitarianism. This question will be a theme of nation-wide debate from now on.

**Mr. Roosevelt Wins His Fourth Term**

## The Book of the Month

IT HAPPENED ONCE BEFORE. *By Roy L. Smith. Abingdon-Cokesbury. $1.00.*

I HAVE a growing appreciation of the mind of my friend, Dr. Roy L. Smith, editor of the *Christian Advocate*. For one thing, his versatility is my despair. But his versatility is rooted in a scholarly knowledge of Christian truth and particularly of biblical lore which commands the respect of those whose professional devotion is given especially to these subjects. He knows his Bible so well that he sees *through* it to the human scene which is reflected in its pages. And he finds this human scene to disclose essentially the same pattern as the contemporary scene in which you and I are living. This is what our study of the Bible ought to do for all of us. It was not written to provide us with texts, but to reveal history and human nature and God's dealings with man in history. When once we see it in this way, the Bible becomes a revelation of our own lives and our own historical situation. All that is happening now "happened once before." In this book Dr. Smith takes us back to the period of the great prophets in the eighth and seventh centuries B. C. and retells the history of that period in the language of our own time. It is really startling to discover how little our human world has changed—how like to our own are the problems the prophets faced! You will be fascinated by this book. And you will find that it brings this part of the Bible marvelously alive!

## A Thought for the Month

AS THE outline of the postwar world takes on increasing clearness, the mood with which we contemplate it is likely to be one of mixed disillusion, resentment and discouragement. Disillusion, because the outcome of the war is so tragically unlike the optimistic prospect which motivated our intervention. Resentment, because the cost has been so utterly incommensurable with the energy we might have spent and the sacrifices we might have made to assure world order and peace without war. Discouragement, because the prospect which we now contemplate is far less promising than that presented by the prewar world. Any realistic comparison of our prospective world situation with that of the prewar world must, I believe, yield the conclusion that the war, instead of marking an advance, has, so far as human eyes can see, immeasurably set back the cause of world order, civilization and peace. Disillusion is inevitable. Resentment toward this war may be condoned as a spur to the avoidance of another war. But discouragement is wrong. It betrays how shallow is our faith. The Christian should never be discouraged, never give up hope, however dark the prospect. For his hope is in the undiscourageable God. This hope is not the same as optimism. Optimism is a mood; its basis is temperamental; it arises from the fond illusion that "all's right with the world," that the forces inherent in history are working toward inevitable progress, that the world is "getting better and better." When the facts no longer support this mood, the optimist becomes a victim of discouragement. But the Christian hope enables a man to acknowledge the setback, to face his disappointment and to begin again, at the place where he now stands, to work harder than ever, in fear and trembling but without despair, knowing that God works with him. And this hope qualifies all his calculations concerning the future. Perhaps his calculations are wrong; perhaps he does not see the situation whole; perhaps God in His wisdom and power will bring unsuspected good out of all this chaos; perhaps in the end He will make even the wrath of man to praise Him!

**Hope Versus Optimism**

Charles Clayton Morrison

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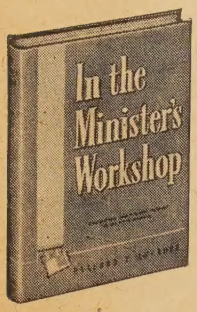


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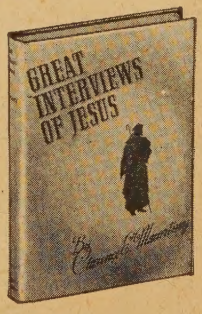


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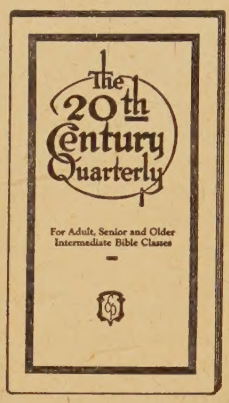


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